



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 110th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 153

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, JUNE 11, 2007

No. 93

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KENT CONRAD, a Senator from the State of North Dakota.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, our Father, speak to us today that here in Your presence we may find knowledge of what You want us to do. Guide our Senators this week so that they clearly understand Your desires and give them the wisdom to obey. Provide them with daily strength to honor You with their service. May they never act in such a way that they lose their self-respect. Keep them from being the kind of people who want to get everything out of life while only putting a little into it. Remind them that they will answer to You for the way they have used their talents to serve others. Give them the ambition to honor You with faithfulness and humility.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KENT CONRAD led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 11, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of Rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I

hereby appoint the Honorable BENJAMIN L. CARDIN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President Pro tempore.

Mr. CARDIN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 3:30 p.m., with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. At 3:30 p.m., the Senate will have 2 hours of debate as follows: an hour on the motion to proceed to the energy legislation, and the second hour will be debate on the motion to proceed to the legislation expressing no confidence in Attorney General Gonzales. Starting at 5:30 p.m. today, the Senate will conduct a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to the Gonzales legislation. If that cloture vote fails, then the Senate will have a vote on the motion to proceed to the energy legislation.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

I now ask unanimous consent that at 5:10 today, until the vote at 5:30, the time be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders, with the majority leader controlling the final 10 minutes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONSIDERATION OF IMMIGRATION AND ENERGY ISSUES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have spent 2 weeks on the immigration bill,

and we listened to hour after hour of debate. I don't think there is a single Senator, no matter how one may have finally voted on the motion to proceed or not to proceed to the bill, who doesn't see an urgent need to fix our badly broken immigration system. Even those people who oppose this legislation vehemently believe the system is broken and needs to be fixed.

So everyone agrees that we need to fix it, and I think the best way to fix it is to legislate. When it came time to vote on the bipartisan compromise last Thursday, 7 Republicans joined with 38 Democrats to invoke cloture. Let us put that in proper perspective. Four-fifths of Democrats voted to proceed to complete this legislation, and one-seventh of the Republicans voted to proceed. That is 80 percent and 14 percent—80 percent of the Democrats said move forward and 14 percent of the Republicans said move forward. Eighty-six percent of the Republicans said no.

Today, in an hour or so, I am going to send a letter to President Bush to lay out my hope that we can still move forward on this legislation, but I want him to know that further progress will require active support from more Republicans, which is something he has to make sure his Republicans understand.

I see in today's Roll Call newspaper that one Republican Senator said: I think the Democrats are going to have to take care of most of those votes, the newspaper article says. Without mentioning the Senator's name, the article states:

Put the onus on Democrats to make up the 15-vote deficit on cloture, saying Republicans have nearly maxed out support on their side.

This appears on page 24 of Roll Call: "I think the Democrats are going to have to deal with most of those [votes]," the Senator said.

Mr. President, 80 percent and 14 percent. It is the President's bill. So if other Republican Senators feel the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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same as the Senator who is expressed on page 24 of Roll Call, saying we have to overcome the 15-vote deficit, it won't happen. We have about maxed out at 80 percent.

The letter I am going to send to the President will say a number of things. Among other things, it will say:

A strong spirit of bipartisanship has held together the coalition of Democrats and Republicans who negotiated the compromise and has sustained the Senate through 2 full weeks of debate on the bill. Unfortunately, that bipartisanship was largely absent in a crucial vote last Thursday.

Then I will go on to state to the President the percentages I just outlined.

I further say in the letter to the President:

We appreciate the efforts of you and other Republicans who have worked with us to get the bill this far. But we believe it will take stronger leadership by you to ensure that opponents of the bill do not block the path to final passage. Simply put, we need many more than seven Republicans to vote for cloture and final passage of the bill.

This letter will be signed by Senators REID, DURBIN, SCHUMER, and MURRAY, the Democratic leadership team.

I want to get the bill done. The overwhelming majority of the Democratic caucus has already voted for cloture. The American people are certainly looking to Congress for leadership. We hope President Bush and his Republican allies in Congress will find a way to work with us to deliver this bill to the immigrants, businesses, and all other Americans who deserve it.

If we see new cooperation and a clear way forward from the Republican caucus, I will do everything possible to re-address the immigration issue after the debate on the Energy bill is completed. And it is difficult for me to even say this because I really wanted to move next to the Defense authorization bill. If we can work out something, when we finish this Energy bill, to complete immigration, I want to do that.

Finally, Mr. President, on energy, we will turn our focus this week to one of the great remaining challenges of our time: our national energy policy.

In 1931, Thomas Alva Edison had a meeting with Henry Ford, whose cars were driving up consumer demand for gasoline. This is what Edison told Ford:

I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.

Here it is, 76 years later—76 years later—and we haven't tackled our addiction to oil, and it has grown into a three-pronged crisis: threatening our economy, threatening our Nation's security, and threatening our environment.

Today, we will use 21 million barrels of oil and tomorrow the same. How much is 21 million barrels of oil? It is a ditch 10 feet deep and 200 football fields long or a ditch 10 feet deep and 11 miles long. Every day, we use that oil—every day.

The bill we begin debate on today—the Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection Energy Efficiency Act of 2007—takes several major steps toward reducing our dependence on foreign oil, promoting renewable energy that we produce right here in America, and protecting our environment from global warming. This bill is a substitute to H.R. 6. This bill is a bipartisan bill.

A number of my chairmen came to me and said: We have this great legislation in my committee; can we bring it forward? I said: No, we have to have an energy bill; our initial energy bill has to be bipartisan. So the Energy Committee, under the direction of Senators BINGAMAN and DOMENICI, came up with a good package. That is part of what we are going to be debating in the Senate.

Then, in the Commerce Committee, Senator STEVENS and Senator INOUE also came up with an extremely important piece of legislation dealing with CAFE standards, which is making cars more efficient. That is going to be in the bill to be brought to the floor.

Senator BOXER and Senator INHOFE also worked together to come up with another piece of legislation that we have put in this one bill. Their part of this bill is also excellent and deals with green buildings and making the massive fleet of Federal cars more energy efficient. It is a good piece of legislation, and it is a bipartisan bill.

There will be people wanting to put tax measures on this, but I think we should wait until the tax committee—Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY—does that. This is a bill which we should try to protect the bipartisan aspect of. It really is quite a good bill, and if we are able to pass it, we will save 4 million barrels of oil every day. That is pretty good.

This bill will set new energy efficiency standards for lighting, appliances, and water use. This bill alone will save ½ trillion gallons of water every year. For a place like Nevada, where we get 4 inches of rain every year in Las Vegas, that is a lot of water.

This is a bill which protects consumers by punishing companies that price gouge and manipulate supply for their profits. It is a bill which invests in carbon capture and storage, and it directs the President and his Cabinet to improve diplomatic relations with our energy partners in order to give us more leverage in the global energy market.

Altogether, this bill will save American consumers tens of billions of dollars every year, cut our oil consumption, reduce our dependence on foreign energy, and, by the way, might just save the planet while we are at it.

It is a good, important bill, a bipartisan bill, and as I have indicated, many of my colleagues will be tempted to offer tax amendments. I ask that they wait until the Finance Committee has had an opportunity to make recommendations on an energy tax

amendment before any additional amendments are offered on this bill.

I hope my colleagues will vote in favor of the motion to proceed. In fact, I hope we can proceed to the bill immediately and not have to use the 30 hours. That will allow time for more amendments.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, just a brief word about the immigration bill. We could have been wrapping it up tonight.

As I indicated to my good friend, the majority leader, on Thursday afternoon, I thought there was every reason to believe we could have finished the immigration bill by tonight. Instead, we ended up having another cloture vote—in my view, a day or two premature—taking Friday off, and today spending our time on a meaningless resolution giving the President advice about whom the Attorney General ought to be.

Having said that, I appreciate the comments of the majority leader that he would like to finish the immigration bill. There is a substantial number of Republican Senators who believe this bill would be an improvement over the current situation, over the status quo, and so I hope we will be able to chart a path to get us back on track at some point and hopefully complete, on a bipartisan basis, what could well be the most important domestic achievement of this Congress.

I am pleased to hear the majority leader say there is a possibility that we could get back to this measure and wrap it up. That certainly is my hope, and I will look forward to working with him toward that end.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 3:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from North Dakota.

ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the issues surrounding